United States Department of the Interior, Douglas McKay, Secretary
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LITTLE TUNA RECIPES

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Little Tuna (Euthynnus alletteratus) is an Atlantic-Coast member of the popular tuna family that has never been utilized to the fullest extent of its potentialities, or reached the popularity of its fellow species. Although it is considered popular by sport fishermen from Maine to South Carolina, the commercial production has been limited mainly to areas of local preference.

Various names are given to this fish, such as spotted bonito, "albacore," false albacore, watermelon tuna, and boohoo. It is found in abundance, at certain seasons of the year, along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Little is generally known regarding its use as food, with the result that little tuna has remained a comparatively undeveloped natural resource.

In appearance, little tuna is sleek and trim with an attractive iridescent color, similar to that of the Atlantic mackerel, although its body is a little chunkier and stouter. The forward and upper part of the body is bluish green, usually shading into a silvery color on the lower sides. Above the lateral line there are oblique, dark, wavy bands, sometimes with a few dark spots near the pectoral fins. The body is smooth except for the corselet of rather large scales in front of the pectoral fins. The average size of the little tuna is less than 30 inches; and, in weight, 10 pounds, although it may reach 20 pounds.

No information is available on the quantity of little tuna caught by sport fishermen, but it is believed to be equal, if not greater, than the amount taken commercially. The commercial catch amounts to about a half million pounds annually.

The flesh of the little tuna is quite dark in color, somewhat coarse in texture, and relatively strong in flavor. Prejudice towards these characteristics probably accounts for its lack of popularity in the fresh fish market.

Since so little is generally known about methods of preparing little tuna, even the sportsmen with their frequent large catches, seldom bring this fish home. The following recipes, developed in the test kitchens of the Fish and Wildlife Service,

represent just a few ways in which this fine game fish can be prepared for the table.

The home canning of little tuna has been described in a booklet issued by the New York Conservation Department, entitled "Home Canning of Tuna," which can be obtained from the Division of Fish and Game, Conservation Department, Albany 7, New York.

Boiled Little Tuna

1½ pounds little tuna steaks
1½ tablespoons salt
1 quart water

Remove skin and bones from fish. Place in boiling, salted water. Cover and return to boiling point; simmer 10 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Flake. Can be served hot with a sauce. Serves 6.

This recipe will yield approximately 2 cups of flaked little tuna than can be used in recipes calling for flaked fish.

Manhattan Little Tuna Chowder

1½ pounds little tuna steaks
2 tablespoons chopped bacon
½ cup chopped onion
½ cup chopped celery
3 cups hot water
1 10½-ounce can concentrated tomato soup
½ cup diced carrot
½ cup diced potatoes
¼ teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
Parsley

Remove skin and bones from fish. Cut into one-half inch cubes. Fry bacon until lightly brown. Add onion and celery; cook until tender. Add remaining ingredients and cook covered for 20 to 25 minutes or until vegetables and fish are tender. Garnish with chopped parsley sprinkled over the top. Serves 6.

Little Tuna Slaw

2 cups flaked little tuna (p. 4)
2 hard-cooked eggs, diced
3 tablespoons chopped green pepper
3 tablespoons chopped onion
2 cups shredded cabbage
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon celery salt
Dash paprika
½ cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
Lettuce

Combine all ingredients except lettuce, being careful not to break fish into too small pieces. Serve on lettuce. Serves 6.

Little Tuna Pie

2 cups flaked little tuna (p. 4)
¼ cup butter or other fat
¼ cup flour
3/4 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon celery salt
Dash pepper
1 10½-ounce can concentrated tomato soup
1 cup water
½ cup diced cooked potatoes
½ cup cooked peas
½ cup chopped onion
1 cup pastry mix

Melt butter; blend in flour and seasonings. Add soup and water gradually and cook until thick and smooth, stirring constantly. Add vegetables and fish. Place mixture in a well-greased 10-inch deep dish pie pan. Prepare pastry as directed and place over top. Bake in a hot oven, 450°F., for 15 to 20 minutes or until brown. Serves 6.

Little Tuna Shepherd's Pie

2 cups flaked little tuna (p. 4)
¼ cup butter or other fat
¼ cup flour
1 teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
2 cups milk
⅔ cup cooked peas
½ cup diced cooked carrot
2 cups seasoned mashed potatoes

Melt butter; blend in flour and seasonings. Add milk gradually and cook until thick and smooth, stirring constantly. Add peas, carrot, and fish. Line sides of a well-greased 1½-quart casserole with a thin layer of potatoes. Fill center with fish mixture and cover with remaining potatoes. Bake in a hot oven, 425°F., for 20 to 25 minutes or until brown. Serves 6.

Little Tuna Noodle Casserole

2 cups flaked little tuna (p. 4)
3 cups cooked noodles
1 10½-ounce can concentrated mushroom soup
1 cup milk
Dash pepper
2 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted
½ cup dry bread crumbs

Combine all ingredients except butter and crumbs. Place in a well-greased 2-quart casserole. Combine butter and crumbs; sprinkle over casserole. Bake in a moderate oven, 350°F., for 25 to 30 minutes or until brown. Serves 6.

Baked Little Tuna Supreme

2 cups flaked little tuna (p. 4)
2 tablespoons butter or other fat
1 tablespoon flour
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon paprika
2 cups milk
2 eggs, beaten
1/3 cup butter or other fat, melted
1½ cups coarse cracker crumbs
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon grated onion
½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

Melt butter; blend in flour and seasonings. Add milk gradually and cook until thick and smooth, stirring constantly. Stir a little of the hot sauce into beaten egg; add to remaining sauce, stirring constantly. Combine butter and crackers. Add lemon juice, onion, Worcestershire sauce, fish, and one-half of the crumbs to sauce. Fill 6 well-greased 10-ounce individual casseroles. Sprinkle remaining crumbs over tops. Bake in a moderate oven, 400°F., for 10 to 15 minutes or until brown. Serves 6.

Little Tuna Baked in Creole Sauce

3 pounds little tuna steaks
¼ cup chopped onion
¼ cup chopped green pepper
½ cup chopped celery
2 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted
1 10½-ounce can concentrated tomato soup
¼ cup water
¼ cup chopped sweet pickle
1 teaspoon salt

Remove skin and bones from fish. Arrange fish in a well-greased, shallow baking pan, 13¼ x 8-3/4 x 1-3/4 inches. Cook onion, green pepper, and celery in butter until tender. Add remaining ingredients and heat. Cover fish with sauce. Bake in a moderate oven, 350°F., for 30 to 35 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Serves 6.

Baked Stuffed Little Tuna Steaks

3 pounds little tuna steaks
1 teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
Bread stuffing
¼ cup butter or other fat, melted
2 slices bacon (optional)

Remove skin and bones from fish. Sprinkle both sides with salt and pepper. Place one-half of the fish in a well-greased, shallow baking pan, 11 x 7 x 1½ inches. Place stuffing on the fish and cover with remaining fish. Fasten together with toothpicks or skewers. Brush with butter and place bacon on top. Bake in a moderate oven, 350°F., for 40 to 45 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Remove fasteners and serve. Serves 6.

Bread Stuffing

3 tablespoons chopped onion
3/4 cup chopped celery
6 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted
1 teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
1 teaspoon thyme, sage, or savory seasoning
1 quart day-old bread crumbs

Cook onion and celery in butter for about 10 minutes or until tender. Combine all ingredients and mix thoroughly. If stuffing seems very dry, add 2 tablespoons water, milk, or fish stock to moisten.

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